SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

editorial

United-States post-Paris Agreement scheme

THERE is a growing tension now in South Viet Nam. Many essential provisions of the Paris Agreement and of its Protocols have been systematically violated by the US and the Saigon regime, the war has not been brought to an actual end and has even been stepped up in many places, US military and even political involvement in South Viet Nam has been deepening.

Such a state of things is no accident. The signing of the Paris Agreement forced on the US and the Saigon administrations by their serious setbacks on various Indochinese fronts has not operated any basic change to US fundamental scheme which is to carry on the implementation of the "Nixon doctrine", impose US neo-colonialist rule on South Viet Nam and keep Viet Nam permanently partitioned. The Thieu regime has made no bones about it : "The Nixon doctrine must continue to be put into effect like during the fighting"; "militarily we must be strong, and so must we politically"...

TO this effect, the US has kept over 20,000 military advisers in civilian disguise, clandestinely supplied the Saigon army since early this year with more than 300,000 tons of ammunition, nearly 500 aircraft, mostly fighters, 600-odd tanks and armoured cars, more than half of them M.48 tanks, 200 combat craft and 600 guns including 105, 175 and 155mm pieces. The 1,000,000-odd strong Saigon army has been beefed up and reequipped by the US which has also been helping Thieu set up a force of repression including 120,000 policemen, 40,000 secret agents, 100,000 "pacification" cadres, and a network of thousands of prisons and concentration camps.

Supported and encouraged by the US, the Thieu administration has been mounting a land-grabbing war aimed at narrowing down the Provisional Revolutionary Government's territory and weakening its strength. Under the US-contrived and -supervised "pacification" program, it has mounted over 100,000 police actions, with unheard-of ferocity, including the impounding of millions of torm-stricken people in Central South Viet Nam into concentration camps, arrested, jailed and tortured tens of thousands of others.

In its zone, all democratic liberties of the people have been suppressed. Freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of organization, freedom of political activity are strictly banned or restricted. Opposition political parties have been disbanded. Masses of dissenters have been ousted from office, purged, punished.

By means of inflation, currency devaluations, taxes, paddy requisitions, the regime has been blooding the people white. Famine is rampant not only in the hurricane-devastated areas but even in urban centres.

To serve the above-described US purpose, Saigon has been doing its best to wreck the Two South Vietnamese Parties Consultative Conference, has turned down every reasonable and sensible proposal of the PRG, hindered and undermined the routine activity of the Joint Military Commission and International Commission. Its obduracy was particularly apparent in its recent refusal to discuss the 5-point plan of the PRG military delegation to the Two South Vietnamese Parties' Joint Military Commission on the strict implantation of the ceasefire and the ending of all hostilities.

There is little doubt that the Thieu regime is hanging on to the US war policy, because its interests clash with the spirit of the Paris Agreement, i.e. peace, independence, democracy and national concord.

THE Nixon administration's protestations of "good will," "peace" and "respect for the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination" as well as its smear campaign against the PRG and the DRVN are only tricks to divert public attention from increasing US immixture in South Viet Nam. But Mr Nixon has been contradicting himself, with such assertions as "the Thieu administration is the only legal government in South Viet Nam." As the US paper Liberation *commented, Nixon was defeated, but since the Paris Agreement, he has begun a counter-offensive to reduce to nought the PRG political advantage. This offensive is, in the US government's words, "another war", and in fact, it has been playing a strategic role in the post-settlement era.*

All US actions since the signing of the Paris Agreement have been aimed at securing for Thieu a "position of strength" from which to carry on the war, encroach upon the PRG areas, gradually blot out the existence of two administrations, two armies, and two zones of control. This US objective is completely illusory, because sabotaging peace and rekindling the war is at utter variance with the fondest wishes of the South Vietnamese which are peace, independence, democracy, national reconciliation and concord, and better living conditions. They are also riddance of US neo-colonialist domination, and enforcement of our people's genuine right to self-determination. Thwarting such aspirations is going against the irresistible march of history.

Thieu's fascization of his administrations, suppression of democratic liberties and victimization of the people will only throw a more lurid light on its nature as a US willing tool, accumulate more crimes against the Fatherland and the people, further alienate it from them and weaken it. Continuation of US use of the Thieu rule as an agent, consolidation of the latter into a huge fascist dictatorship will not be able to conceal its aggressive essence nor to turn the tide. The US will bump its head against a wall, if it persists in pursuing its involvement and intervention in South Viet Nam's internal affairs.

THE path it has been taking is but a beaten track. American public opinion holds that Nixon is relapsing into past mistakes and failures. But future mistakes and failures will surely be so serious that their harmful effects on US credit already at an all-time low are simply unforeseeable.

SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

The PAVN artillery at last time to shelled Tan Son Nhut airbase in retaliation against US-Thieu deliberate bombing of the liberated zone

An International Red Cross Committee denial

FOLLOWING the article *"The International Red Cross Committee in Wonderland"* in the issue N° 217, October 8, 1973 of this magazine, our Editorial Board received a letter dated Geneva, November 6, 1973, signed by Mr J. Ott, I.R.C.C. delegate general for Asia. There was mention in it of a communiqué of his organism, dated October 12, 1973, denying Thieu's Viet Nam Press Agency's allegation that it had confirmed that all "Communist" prisoners detained by Saigon were well treated. Thus the "good conditions" of those inmates and the "zealous care" of the jailers with which they had declared their satisfaction were only US-Thieu fabrications broadcast on September 27, 1973, by the "Voice of *Freedom*" which should be renamed "Voice of *Falsehood*", for having turned a hell on earth like Chi Hoa into a wonderland.

The I.R.C.C. denial once more supplied the evidence that the US-aided and abetted Saigon regime is an impudent liar unscrupulous enough to make use of international organisations' names (in this specific case the I.R.C.C.) for the diffusion of its figments.

It has been contravening Article 8 of the Protocol to the Paris Agreement concerning the return of captured personnel paragraph b of which reads as follows :

"All Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Viet Nam shall be treated humanely at all times, and in accordance with international practice.

They shall be protected against all violence to life, and person, in particular against murder in any form, mutilation, torture and cruel treatment, and outrages against personal dignity. The detaining parties shall not deny or delay their return for any reason, including the fact that captured persons may, on any grounds, have been prosecuted or sentenced. These persons shall not be forced to join the armed forces of the detaining party.

They shall be given adequate food, clothing, shelter, and the medical attention required for their state of health. They shall be allowed to exchange post-cards and letters with their families and receive parcels."

All these provisions have been systematically ignored and transgressed by Thieu who continues to claim shamelessly that there are no political prisoners in his territory, while trying to get the I.R.C.C. confirm his "humane treatment" of "Communist prisoners" at Chi Hoa !

We fully sympathize with the international charitable body, a victim of US-Thieu propaganda and believe that its indignant feeling will aim at the very culprits, i.e. Mr Thieu and his US bosses.

We take note of the I.R.C.C. position regarding the issue of civilian detainees in South Viet Nam and do hope that it will make an active contribution, together with American and world opinion, to the effort to have the Vietnamese civilian personnel still held by Thieu released immediately and all detainees in South Viet Nam always well-treated.

The South Vietnamese who have been suffering in their flesh and blood from the US neo-colonialists' atrocities, appreciate, and feel thankful for, every person and national or international organization making a difference between the aggressor and the victim of aggression, between the victim and the executioner and upholding Viet Nam's cause which is also that of truth, humanism and international law.

We denounce the gaoler Nguyen Van Thieu...

Secret liquidation of prisoners

On October 10, 1973, the Saigon administration clandestinely transferred 106 civilian personnel from Con Son (Poulo Condor) prison to Nha Trang and Da Nang. Among those transferred to Nha Trang were Tran Hong Hiep (alias Tro) arrested on Oct. 8, 1968, and Vo Rit arrested on September 27, 1965, both native of Dien Son village, Dien Khanh district, Khanh Hoa province. On October 12, 1973, the Saigon administration took them to Dien Khanh and forced them to sign "release papers" and "open arm" applications. But they refused and asked to be returned to the RSVN PRG. The Nguyen Van Thieu administration told them that the PRG had disowned them and so, they were free to return to their families. On their way to their home village, they were kipnapped and murdered by Thieu's secret police. To cover up this savagery, on the same day, Saigon police broke into the home of Hiep's mother and took her to Dien Khanh where she was beaten up and questioned about the "whereabouts" of her son.

Throwing victims into the river

On October 14, 15, 16 and 17, 1973, the people living along the Hau Giang river in An Quang, Huu Luu, Nghiep Anh and Dai An villages, Tra Cu district, Tra Vinh province, retrieved many bodies of political prisoners from the Saigon administration Tra Vinh provincial jail. Most of them had no clothing on, one was bound hand and foot and bore several knife wounds. Another had his throat cut and his limbs chopped off. A third had a long nail driven into his skull.

On February 19, 1973, Thieu's police in Bao Thanh village (Ben Tre province) tied political prisoners in pairs and pushed them into the sea. At Ben Keo, they gunned down 7 inmates freshly brought from Poulo Condor, then dropped their bodies into the Vam Co Dong river (Tay Ninh). Dozens of corpses were seen floating daily on the Vam O Mon river, some headless, others limbless. One of them had a bamboo stake tied to his foot. All were without any clothing. Hundreds of other bodies of political prisoners were found in grottoes in remote, untrodden areas in Tay Ninh, Da Nang and Qui Nhon.

Above are only some of the atrocities of Nguyen Van Thieu. They bear testimony to the fact that he is not only delaying the return of political prisoners and continuing to detain and torture hundreds of thousands of patriots but also brutally making away with them.

The responsibility and duty of all of us is to stay the bloody hands of Nguyen Van Thieu and save the lives of hundred of thousands of political prisoners.

LOC NINH

clamours for revenge

NOVEMBER 7, 1973 began as a normal day in Loc Ninh. Life in this small township in Binh Duong province northwest of Saigon was pursuing its usual course with the habitual bustle at the market place and along the streets. Workers were going to their factories and pupils to their schools. The shops were crowded with customers. From the pagoda came the rhythmic beatings of tocsin and the singsong of Buddhist prayers.

As usual, the local infirmary was giving care to its patients. In the suburban villages, peasants were bringing in their first rice crop in peace.

A bright sun was illuminating Loc Ninh when flight after flight of US-supplied war planes of the Saigon administration roared in and dropped hundreds of bombs. They were of all types and denominations, from the F.5s, A.57s to the AD.6s and the L.19 spotter aircraft. The raid lasted from 9 : 00 in the morning till past noon.

The three streets Ninh Phu, Ninh Phuoc and Ninh Hoa lay in ruins, engulfed in smoke and fire. Among the debris one could see broken altars and smashed incense burners. Here and there on the road, oranges, bananas and sweet potatoes lay scattered beside broken stalls.

In Ninh Pho street, the main department store of the town was literally razed to the ground. All the houses in its neighbourhood were also destroyed. Two bodies sprawled in a sewer. Nearby was a headless corpse buried beneath a heap of rubble. They had been hit when coming out of a shop.

The destruction was even more extensive at Ninh Hoa and Ninh Phuoc streets. The medical station, the pharmacy, the office of the local educational service, the school and many other public establishments together with dozens of houses along the streets were reduced to rubble. Bao Loc pagoda, one of the biggest in Loc Ninh town located beside a picturesque stream was also badly damaged, a big gold lacquered board with a Chinese sign on it at the gate of the pagoda had been torn down and completely ruined. A statue of Buddha was buried in the brick debris beside a shattered Book of Scripture of the Buddhist religion. Even the small temple beside Highway 13 was not spared. The altar was crushed and the yellow cloth used to cover it was a tattered rag lying on the sand-covered ground. Shreds of it hung on the charred wall. A score yards away, a big-sized bomb fell on the city church, causing bad damage. To the left of Ninh Phuoc street, not a house was left standing within an area of hundreds of square metres. Sandals and shoes littered the road. Several upturned Hondas lay beside crumpled bicycles.

Mr Truong Thanh, a Chinese bazaar owner, was killed together with all his children. All the four children of Mrs Van died in a shelter at the market. Their father was Toa, a corporal of the Saigon army who had just been released from a POW camp of the Provisional Revolutionary Government under the Paris Agreement. Mrs Tien, 70, Mr Tong Van Tich and Chung, a 13-year boy, were seriously injured. Within a few hours, more than 200 houses were flattened and hundreds of civilian casualties inflicted.

Were these houses and these people "military targets" selected by Saigon for its "retaliatory strikes"? Nothing could be more absurd and cynical than this declaration of the Saigon military spokesman : "Military installations and targets from one to two kilometres from the centre of the town have been attacked."

Loc Ninh is clamouring for revenge. The more crimes they commit, the higher runs popular feeling against US and its client administration in Saigon and the harsher will be the punishment by the Liberation forces.

● in the cities

o Saigon workers' representatives recently met Nguyen Van Thieu's "Labour Consultative Committee" to protest the Saigon administration's stubborn refusal to fix minimum wages for workers to keep pace with the rising cost of living. All Saigon workers and labourers, declared those representatives, will continue their action until satisfaction is given to their claims.

o On November 5, the whole student body of *Tung Thien Vuong* School gathered in the school playing-ground to protest against the Saigon administration's sending of a "Control team of the Education and Youth Ministry," accompanied by policemen and special agents, to arrest students and brutalize teachers. A fierce resistance was offered by the former, ready to throw stone in case of further repressive measures. The clash lasted more than two hours. Finally the head master and monitor had to promise to give due consideration to the students' demands.

o Misery and diseases are threatening those penned up by the Saigon authorities into the Suoi Nghe concentration camp, Binh Tuy province. Not a few families have already had to sell all their belongings to buy some rice. The ration issued by the authorities is just enough for them to pay their debts. Shortage of rice has reached alarming proportions, and some people have died from poisonous tubers. Nearly all families have sick members, children are thin and pale from malnutrition. The Saigon administration is showing total indifference to such a state of things and moreover is winking at misappropriation of rice and wheat by a number of agents who also resort to cruelties against the "refugees."

o In the last three weeks of October the Saigon administration groundlessly cut off its rice supply to the 30,000 people on Ly Son island, Quang Ngai province. Moreover they cracked down upon those who brought rice to the place for sale. As a result, not a grain of rice was left there and the 30,000 people had to live on vegetables after exhausting their stock of secondary foodstuffs. Confronted with famine, those 30,000 people rose up and staged a demonstration with streamers and sticks in front of the local administrative seat to demand immediate relief. The Quang Ngai authorities had to dispatch 20 tons of rice to Ly Son island, but this was not enough to distribute a kilo to each person. The fight of the Ly Son people for more rice is still continuing.

o On November 1, policemen were again deployed by Thieu to confiscate the *Dai Dan Toc*, an opposition newspaper. Unlike on previous occasions, no official decision was taken to the effect, but the policemen were secretly ordered to seize all copies on the news stands of the city without any justification.

o On November 14, the Exchange Board of the Thieu administration made public a decision to devaluate once again the Saigon piaster: one dollar which was worth 525 piasters can now be changed for 535 piasters. This was the second devaluation in less than a month.

in a liberated village

VILLAGE C, liberated now, was busy building a new life. On the main road, rebuilt and enlarged, bicycles and Honda motorbikes, laden with goods, moved in two incessant streams. Its pavements were alive with pedestrians. Along village lanes, peasants and their cattle hurried to the fields past rows upon rows of thriving bamboo and coconut saplings to bring in rice and ground nut crops.

In the yard of Mrs Sau's, we saw two big heaps of groundnut plants thick with nuts. A heap of dry paddy occupied part of the house. On the kitchen rack lay several bulging sacks of dried sweet potato and manioc, and just below them hang clusters of heavy corncobs put aside for the next planting. A fat pig was waiting for a feed at the back of the house, undisturbed by the row kicked up by two bands of roving chickens.

The fact that we had not met before did not lessen in the least the warmth with which Mrs Sau received us. She hastily threw the last handful of dried sweet potato chips to the chickens and invited us in.

"Life's very good now", she said when we had sat down on the bed fragrant with the smell of fresh wood, with the tea set ready. "We've been working like mad since the signing of the Agreement. We go to the fields long before dawn and do not come home until sunset", she added.

After we had taken leave of our hostess, we were shown round the village by Toan, Chairman of the local People's Revolutionary Committee.

We saw the vast fields, where ripening rice shone like gold in the morning sun, the fat groundnuts awaiting pickers, the lush rows of manioc, the juicy sugar canes.

"The hills over there", our guide said, pointing to his left, "were full of coconut palms, but they were heavily devastated by bulldozers. We have just planted over 500 young trees. They are taking roots now".

As we walked on, he told us of the general situation of the village. The folks had put 145 hectares of waste land under manioc and more than 500 additional hectares under late rice. Coconut and banana had been grown on virtually every spare inch between paddies and orchards, and each family now owned 2 or 3 pigs, 4 or 5 hens, and dozens of chickens.

Twice a day, in the morning and the afternoon, hundreds of children went to school at the call of drums.

For adults, there were ABC courses in the evening. Besides, each hamlet had a medicine chest and a trained nurse and entertained by an ensemble.

T. P.

Operation Phoenix and the failure of pacification in South Viet Nam

(Continued)

Phoenix and the "Neutralization" Cycle

The Phoenix program, also known by its Vietnamese equivalent, Phuong Hoang, was launched by the CIA in 1967 and placed under CORDS jurisdiction in July, 1969. Not surprisingly, US government officials are particularly vague when asked to describe the Phoenix program; for instance, in his 1971 testimony to the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, Ambassador Colby provided this meagre description of the program: "The Phœnix program includes an intelligence program to identify the members of the VCI, an operational program to apprehend them, a legal program to restrain them and a detention program to confine them." Phoenix "is not a program of assassination," he noted; "in the course of normal military operations or police actions to apprehend them, however, VCI are killed as members of military units or while fighting off arrest." The results of this "non-assassination" program, Colby indicated, included the deaths of 20,587 South Vietnamese civilians (identified in Government statistics as "VCI's") between January 1968 and May 1971. Colby also indicated that 28,978 persons had been imprisoned under Phœnix, and another 17,717 persons converted into agents for the Saigon regime.

Funds for the Phœnix program are provided by the US Government through a number of different channels. Aid to South Viet Nam's National Police force (NP), which has overall responsibility for Phœnix operations, is provided by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Public Safety program, and by the Department of Defense (DOD). Between 1967 and 1972, US contributions to the NP totalled 155 million dollars, with USAID providing 85.7 million dollars and the DOD 69.6 million dollars. The salaries of 637 US advisors assigned to Phœnix, estimated by Colby to total 10.7 million dollars annually, are paid by CORDS with funds supplied by USAID, the DOD, and the CIA. CORDS also financed the construction of 44 Phœnix interrogation centers (total cost: 3.7 million dollars). Finally, most expenses of the South Vietnamese para-military forces employed in Phœnix operations — the National Police Field Forces, the Regional and Popular Forces, and the Provincial Reconnaissance Units—are borne by the US government under Viet Nam war appropriations. Between 1968 and 1970, 80 per cent, or 3.2 million dollars, of the total CORDS budget was earmarked for support of such forces.

Although described by Colby as a Government of Viet Nam program, Phœnix is largely financed by the United States and US advisors participate in every step of the Phœnix cycle from the time a VCI suspect is "targeted" by the district intelligence center to the time he/she is "neutralized" through assassination, torture or incarceration. Using information acquired by the House Government Operations Committee and newspaper reports, the following portrait of US involvement in Phœnix has been assembled.

Most Phœnix operations begin at the district (or province) Coordination Center (DIOCC or VIOCC) in each area, where representatives of American and South Vietnamese intelligence agencies compile dossiers on all local residents suspected of collaboration with the NLF. Under the GVN edict governing Phœnix activities (known as SOP.3), the DIOCC's are required to maintain dossiers on all persons "who make suspicious utterances such as expressions which distort government of Viet Nam policies and the action of government of Viet Nam cadres; false rumors which confuse and frighten the people; and creation of division and hatred among the populace and between the populace and government of Viet Nam cadres." Such data are normally collected by paid informers (or those who have been blackmailed into supplying such information), police officers, and local government officials. If a person has three such references in his dossier, whether verified or not, he or she is targeted as a "VCI cadre" or "VCI suspect" and his/her name is added to the "blacklist" (or "greenlist") carried by all military and police units in South Viet Nam. Once on the blacklist, a person is liable to immediate arrest, interrogation and detention without right to trial or other judicial safeguards.

(To be continued)

MICHAEL T. KLARE

URGENT RELIEF AND ASSISTANCE TO COMPATRIOTS VICTIMS OF TYPHOON AND FLOODS

the NFL and the PRG

HURRICANE Sarah hitting central Trung Bo recently has resulted, according to still incomplete figures, in 60 people missing, 80 per cent of the crop ruined and 70 per cent of the cattle drowned. While it was raging the water level went up 2 metres, 6.5 meters at places (Due Duc district, Quang Nam province).

In Quang Nam province, 14,000 people had to evacuate, 5,853 houses were damaged, and 80 per cent of the crop destroyed ; in Quang Ngai province the number of displaced people ran as high as 100,000 ; in Binh Dinh province 30,000 were displaced and 1,000 houses either swept away or sunk. The calamity destroyed 17 sections of road, carried away 15 bridges, and even eroded the An Khe pass.

The Presidium of the Central Committee of the National Front for Liberation and the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government Council issued an appeal saying : "The Presidium of the NFL Central Committee and the RSVN PRG Council share the suffering caused by the typhoon and ensuing floods and express their sincere sympathy to our fellow-countrymen of the stricken areas and to families victims of devastation. They warmly commend those fighters and civilians who calmly faced the calamities, strengthening their solidarity in adversity, giving mutually help and assistance, thereby limiting the losses visited by the hurricanes."

The appeal forcefully denounced to public opinion at home and abroad the Saigon administration's criminal exploitation of the calamities — by staging continuous encroachment and "pacification" operations carrying out draft into the army and forced emigration, grabbing rice and raking taxes, making wholesale arrests and torturing, and murdering a number of people.

The appeal urged that the people, now more than ever, increase mutual help and affection in order to tide over all difficulties in their everyday life. They should also enhance their vigilance and resolutely foil the enemy's attempts to take advantage of the disaster.

On November 16, 1973, the Executive of the NFL Committee and the PRG Representation in Central Trung Bo met in a joint session and decided on urgent measures of relief to the stricken provinces.

It was resolved that Relief Committees be set up at various levels, with a view to mobilizing the people for mutual help. All will be prevailed upon to assist the victims either with food and clothing or manpower. Rice, clothing, medicines sent as relief should be distributed with high priority for, and directly to, the needy who are also to be encouraged and helped to settle down as quickly as possible and resume farming.

The NFL Committee and the PRG Representation in Central Trung Bo also decided to present the victims with a certain amount of rice, cloth, medicines and money worth four hundred million piasters.

DRVN Government's relief to flood victims in South Viet Nam

ON learning of the desaster caused by Sarah typhoon to the people of Central Trung Bo, President Ton Duc Thang of the DRVN cabled a message to Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho which read among other things that the North Vietnamese was deeply moved by losses in lives and property of their compatriots victims of floods and typhoon.

"On behalf of the Northerers," President Ton Duc Thang said, "I share the sufferings and woes of our Southerners and send them rice, fabrics and medicines."

On November 19, Premier Pham Van Dong of the DRVN called on Mr Nguyen Van Tien, head of the Special Representation of the RSVN PRG to the DRVN. In the name of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and Government and people of North Viet Nam, the Premier expressed his profound sympathy to the victims and asked Mr Nguyen Van Tien to send them 60,000 tons of rice, 8,000,000 metres of fabrics and a quantity of medicines.

For our beloved Fatherland

Convention of Vietnamese Students in France

The 6th Convention of the Association of Vietnamese students in France met on Nov. 10 and 11 at Orsay, Paris University. The attendance included 150 student representatives from Paris and other provinces of France.

Representatives of patriotic students and overseas Vietnamese from Belgium, Switzerland, West Germany also were present. Messages of greetings were received from patriotic students and overseas Vietnamese organisations in the United States, Japan and Canada.

The gathering was graced by the presence of Nguyen Van Hieu, Minister, Head of the Delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam to the Two-Party Consultative Conference.

It unanimously passed a resolution calling on all Vietnamese students in France to study well and to make an active contribution to the national fight for peace, independence and democracy in South Viet Nam, to demand US-Saigon strict implementation of the cease-fire, immediate release of political prisoners, ensurance of democratic liberties, respect for the Third Component and formation of the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord.

A message of greeting was sent by the Congress to the Union of South Vietnamese Youth and Students for Liberation.

Summer Camp of the Vietnamese Students' Association in France

A Summer Camp was organized on the Mediterranean Coast by the Association of Vietnamese Students in France last summer. It was named "Posture 73" and included a variegated programme of activities: seminars, soirées, theatrical performances. An "Indochina Day" with the participation of Cambodian and Lao Students was held. A cultural evening at Balarue-les-Bains drew an attendance of 600.

The Summer Camp collected money and signatures to a petition for the immediate release of political prisoners detained by the Saigon administration.

Fund for the Fatherland

An extraordinary Congress of Vietnamese Residents in France was convened to unanimously decide that the ten years old "Anti-US Fund" be from now on changed into "Fund for the Fatherland". Elderly Vietnamese nationals were the first contributors with donations totalling 7,000 francs.

— Vietnamese intellectuals in France have contributed 300 dental apparatuses worth 300,000 francs to their fellow-countrymen at home.

A first batch of 100 apparatuses was handed to Pham Van Ba, Director of the Information Service of the PRG in France. A number of recorders was also sent by Vietnamese intellectuals to help students in Viet Nam in the learning of foreign languages.

In the Saigon-controlled zone:

Things are going from bad to worse

AFTER long years of struggle for a living in the eleven districts of Saigon—Gia Dinh, I was returning today to Can Tho, hoping for an easier living there. Hardly had I got off the bus when a Lambretta driver came up to me and said: "Where are you going? I'll only charge a moderate fare."

The motor bike took me through dark and desert streets. At T. crossroad, it was stopped by a checking post. I seized the occasion to enquire about the driver's trade and living. When he knew I was coming back to Can Tho to earn a livelihood he shook his head and said:

"Things are no better here. Life is almost unbearable. I am for one a civil servant at an office. Immediately after my work I have to hurry up for a few trips like this. I have to feed my children at any cost. My monthly salary is 13,000 (Saigon) piastres, besides my wife is hard-working and is doing some small trade, and yet we cannot properly feed our four children. Some years ago, they could still go to school, but this year as the economy worsened, they had to stay at home. My daughter is looking after her younger sister, and her elder brother is working to earn some extra money which is insignificant and he is under constant threat of being forced into the army. I myself am about to be sent to an "administrative revolution" course at Vung Tau, and shall be later dispatched to some rural area. I'm not sure I'll be of any use to our peasants. What is certain is that I'll not be able to earn a few additional piastres and my spending will be bigger. How can I be at rest to attend the course? If I refuse to go to Vung Tau, or if after going there I fail in the examination, I'll be dismissed for sure and my children will go hungry. Joblessness is now rampant. It's very difficult to find a job but very easy to lose it. Life is hard indeed today in the Western Capital (1)."

"For them, Revolution is only a mask," I said, sympathizing with the driver's predicament, "it's just a pacification campaign they are carrying on. You are sent to the country only to bully the peasants, so that they can rule longer in Saigon. We the poor are acting as their tools just to torment one another for them to enjoy the monopoly of a pleasant life."

Our conversation came to an end as we arrived at the market place. I paid my fare and started searching for an acquaintance's home. As I saw *My Xuyen* store closed, I inquired of a neighbour, a lady who stared at me and answered in a disheartened voice:

"You must be a stranger here. All this slackness is due to this year's heavy taxation. The State collects arrears of taxes of the previous years, — which years no one knows — you have to pay two million piastres at one time, or else you have to close down your shop!"

"Why so much?" I ventured. "A small shop like this has to pay two million, how much then has a bigger shop?"

"It is the so-called 'tax on property,' based on the value of our property. Then there are other taxes, the licence tax, the TVA, and so on and so forth. This shop is only two years old, so its taxes are not too heavy, but other shops are completely overwhelmed. Those shops around, for instance, *Dan Sinh* had to pay 8 million piastres, *Vinh Ky* more than 5 million, *Tay Do* more than 3 million, some others were unable to pay and their property were auctioned while their owners simply disappeared... All the taxes are exorbitant ones, unheard-of so far. But understandably, Mr Thieu has to squeeze the people to feed the war and please his Yankee boss!"

"Will you have to bow to the State's will?"

"No", answered the lady with a chuckle "the State will not find it easy to collect the taxes. I gather that the shop owners are planning to quit, return their trade licences in protest against heavy taxation, and some have actually done it."

I took leave of the lady and strolled around the market. Everywhere anti-taxation talks could be heard. A middle-aged woman was paying a vendor and complaining to her:

"You see, things are so hard that I have to buy rice litre by litre, because I have not enough money to buy a big amount at a time. And the rice I buy is of the worst quality, red and broken. My salary is so low that I can afford only rice and some sauce and salt. Now I have to get shopping everyday. What a waste of time! And sometimes rice is not available, then my whole family has to go hungry. The price of sweet potato also increases very quickly since most families now feed on it instead of rice."

"Business is at a standstill," the trader said, "small vendors like us are crushed under a deluge of taxes, prices are skyrocketing, money is scarce, on certain days there are no customers in the whole maket!"

"Things are anyhow better here than in Saigon," I chimed in, "where some have already died of starvation!"

Thereupon, she confided she knew of a supply sergeant who, out of despair, mixed poison with soup and took his and his whole family's life, being too poor to give proper care to his ailing wife and children.

Such is the picture of the life of the labouring people in the Saigon-controled zone. And yet Nguyen Van Thieu is continually boasting of his "practice of democracy," his plan to "turn all civil servants and militarymen into propertied people" and his programme to "rehabilitate the country and society!"

P. V.

(1) Can Tho *is often called Western Capital.*

Is the same fate in store for me?

RSVN PRG Delegation meets Delegation of "Free Forces of VN"

The RSVN PRG delegation at the Two-Party Consultative Conference in La Celle Saint Cloud, Paris, headed by Minister Nguyen Van Hieu recently had a meeting with the delegation of the Central Committee of the "Free Forces of Viet Nam" headed by Lt. Col. Tran Dinh Lan.

The two delegations discussed the current grave situation in South Viet Nam and released a press communiqué listing the following points upon which the two sides had reached complete agreement:

1/ The US continuation of its military involvement and interference under all forms in the internal affairs of South Viet Nam as well as the Saigon administration's pursuance of its policy of winning by force is a serious violation of the fundamental provisions of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and also the cause of the present aggravation of the situation in South Viet Nam.

2/ A signatory to the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué, the US has the duty to strictly respect and scrupulously implement all its commitments. It must respect the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people and the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people.

3/ The Saigon administration must abandon its bellicose policy by strictly respecting and implementing the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and the Joint Communiqué. It must stop all operations and bombardments against the areas under the RSVN PRG's control and give up its "special pacification" programme. It must quickly set free all political prisoners, guarantee all democratic liberties for the people living in its areas, recognize the third segment as a political force equal with the other two segments and respect the third segment's role and position in the political life in South Viet Nam.

4/ The Paris Agreement on Viet Nam which aims to end the war and restore peace by allowing the internal questions of South Viet Nam to be settled through consultation in the spirit of national reconciliation and concord, has formally recognized that there exist in South Viet Nam now two administrations, two armies, two areas of control and three main political forces.

All manoeuvres aimed at denying this fact must be condemned by the South Vietnamese people. All acts aimed at sabotaging the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam should be penalized so as to preserve this Agreement and to see that all its provisions be strictly implemented.

PRG Delegation in official visit to socialist countries

A delegation of the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government has left the Republic of South Viet Nam for official friendship visits to a number of socialist countries at the invitation of the Governments of these countries.

The delegation is headed by Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the Presidium of Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and President of the Advisory Council to the RSVN PRG.

The farewell ceremony was formally organized on its departure at the liberated zone in the presence of President Huynh Tan Phat and many ministers of the PRG, members of the Advisory Council, members of the Central Committees of the NFL and the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces and representatives of mass organisations and the People's Liberation Army.

PRG's Delegation to visit the PRC

A delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam headed by Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, Chairman of the Presidium of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee and President of the Advisory Council of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, has left the liberated zone to pay an official friendship visit to the People's Republic of China.

The Delegation comprises:

— Mrs Nguyen Thi Binh, member of the South Viet Nam NFL Central Committee and Foreign Minister,

— Mr Le Quang Chanh, member of the South Viet Nam NFL Central Committee and Deputy-Foreign Minister,

— Mr Nguyen Van Quang, member of the South Viet Nam NFL Central Committee and RSVN Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the People's Republic of China,

— Mr Ho Xuan Son, member of the Secretariat of the South Viet Nam NFL Central Committee and head of the Presidential Department.

Accompanied the Delegation were also Messrs Nguyen Nhu, head of the Second Departement of the Foreign Ministry and Le Trung Nam, deputy-head of the Protocol Department of the Foreign Ministry and several cadres.

RSVN PRG Delegation stops over in Hanoi

Large crowds of the Hanoi population gave on Nob. 18 morning a stiring welcome to the delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam led by President Nguyen Huu Tho, which stopped over in Hanoi.

President Ton Duc Thang warmly received Lawyer President Nguyen Huu Tho and his party at the Government Guest House.

Present at the reception were Truong Chinh, Politburo member of the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central Committee, Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee; Pham Van Dong, Politburo member of the VNWP CC, Premier of the DRVN; Nguyen Duy Trinh, Politburo member of the VNWP CC, Vice-Premier, Foreign Minister; Xuan Thuy, Secretary of the VNWP CC; Hoang Quoc Viet, member of the VNWP CC, member of the Presidium of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front Central Committee; and Nguyen Co Thach, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affair.

Nguyen Van Tien, Head of the RSVN Special Representation in the DRVN, was also on hand.

Young pioneers, "good nephews and nieces" of President Ho Chi Minh, presented President Nguyen Huu Tho and the other members of the delegation with bouquets of flowers. President Ton Duc Thang and other State leaders of the DRVN warmly shook hands with and hugged President Nguyen Huu Tho and other delegates amidst rousing applause.

President Ton Duc Thang, President Nguyen Huu Tho, Chairman Truong Chinh and Premier Pham Van Dong stood a long while at the perron of the Government Guest House waving to the representatives of the Hanoi population who expressed the profound feelings of the North Viet Nam people to their valiant brothers and sisters in the South.

Later in the day, the PRG delegation led by President Nguyen Huu Tho left Hanoi for a friendship visit to a number of the socialist countries.

Accompanying President Nguyen Huu Tho to Gia Lam airport were Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, Xuan Thuy and Hoang Quoc Viet.

At the plane-side, President Nguyen Huu Tho warmly embraced Premier Pham Van Dong, Vice-Premier Nguyen Duy Trinh, Xuan Thuy and Hoang Quoc Viet.

Flying together with the delegation was Chinese Ambassador to the Republic of South Viet Nam Wang Jo-chieh.

Equatorial land in effervescence

Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and President Idi Amin at the airport

A resplendent sun and a drum on a shield put in front of two crossed halberds. A stag stands, on the right of the shield, and a stork on the left. That is the emblem of the Republic of Uganda stamped on an invitation from President Idi Amin to Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho to visit his country.

An East African country, Uganda is traversed by the equator. To reach its capital located right on the equator, it took us less than two hours by air from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and the members of the PRG delegation landed at Entebbe airport at a particular moment: 12 o'clock on the equator.

The airport was alive with flags: blue-red ones with a golden star and black-yellow-red ones with a stork; a red carpet had been laid from the plane's ramp to the VIP Room. Uganda's top personages were present, and with them members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of the masses, a guard of honour (paratroopers) in muster trim, song and dance ensembles in colourful costumes ready to perform... President Idi Amin, a tall man, in a general's brown uniform and with a golden baton in hand, and other leaders of the Republic came up to the ramp of the plane to welcome their guests. The President hugged Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and his little son offered him a magnificent bouquet. The rituals reserved for a Head of State had begun.

On the way from the airport to Kampala, the delegation stopped for a while at a market place on the roadside. The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry showed Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho samples of Uganda's produce: sweet potato, cassava, beans, aubergine, amaranth, maize, peanut, etc. There were various kinds of dried fish, but most remarkable of all was a 100kg carp, 1 metre long by 30 centimetres wide, that had just been caught in Victoria Lake, the world's second largest, the greater part of which belongs to Uganda and the rest to Tanzania. Built on its bank, Kampala enjoys a rather cool climate in spite of its location on parallel O.

The Nile Hotel, reserved for state guests, stands on a hill, near the International Conference Centre, a modern architectural work. A motorcyclist escort and a dozen black limousines stood by in front of the hotel. Now and then a white and blue chopper took off from, or landed on, a grassy yard. Bugles of the guards of honour resounded whenever President Amin came to, or Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho went out of, the hotel. Their frequent blowing spelled out the busy time-table of the visitors.

These were shown Kabalega National Park. To reach the upper reaches of the Nile Victoria where it was located we had to ride 500km through forests, innumerable hills and an immense steppe as well as rural agglomerations and many townlets.

Banana, cassava, maize, papaw grew luxuriant along the roadside. So did couch-grass amidst which we saw plenty of termite hills higher than a man's head. Tall cactuses dotted the fields and the steppe, mingled with a particular kind of tree with an extensive foliage, whose fruit hang like strings of sausage. We crossed peasants on bicycle or cutting grass with long-handled-sickles, and women in loose garnments on their way to the market place with baskets on their heads, sometimes a baby on the back, talking and laughing merrily.

WE crossed the Nile Victoria, stopped over at a hotel then, aboard a ship, went upstream to see the Kabalega waterfall. Our small white-painted vessel steamed up close to the shore, the current being too rapid. Flocks of hippopotamuses splashed all along the river. They swam near our craft, stared and blew water at us. Several massive, curve-tusked elephants ambled toward the river bank for a drink. At the roar of our boat, some long-necked camels raised their heads and wagged their tails while a few crocodiles dozing in the sunshine woke up with a start and hurriedly plunged into the water.

Kabalega waterfall is 40 metres high. According to experts, it is one of the two sources of the Nile, the world's largest river (7,000km) flowing into the Mediterranean on Egyptian soil.

The Kabalega National Park is in fact a succession of steppes and low forests. Animals living here are not shy of man. As we rode past, monkeys going in packs called to one another, climbed on trees and shook their branches as though to intimidate us. Some rhinoceroses, caught unawares, tried to hide under the grass. Grazing long-necked buffaloes craned their heads and gazed at us. The most numerous were stags for which Uganda has earned a world reputation. A valuable export line, heads with horns preserved by chemical processes are used as ornaments to be fitted on the wall while legs are made into lamp stands.

Many regions being still unexploited, the people of Uganda live in villages, towns and townlets. They know Viet Nam through radio broadcasts, TV and newspapers. It was the first time that a PRG delegation paid a visit to their country.

The day the delegation came to the Kabalega area, the locals held a meeting at the very ferry. Introducing Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho, his escort, a Ugandan Minister said:

"This is the President of the South Vietnamese people, victors of the American imperialists."

The gatherers, old and young, whispered to each other flattering remarks about Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, Kissinger's "formidable opponent" at the Paris bargaining table.

Song and dance ensembles performed tirelessly from noon to late afternoon, and again in the evening far into the night. Their ardour reflected their sympathy and respect for the Chief of State of the Republic of South Viet Nam. The day Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and President Amin drove in an open limousine to the Nakivubo football park in Kampala, the thousands of spectators present there stood up, shouted slogans, clacked their tongues, clapped their hands, and threw their hats up into the air.

The flag salute at the East African football final was given Uganda's and RSVN's colours. "Let's Liberate the South" — RSVN's anthem — again resounded on the borderline of the Northern and Southern Hemisphere.

The Ugandans and their leader displayed special affection for the South Vietnamese people and the members of the PRG delegation. Whenever Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho went anywhere President Idi Amin called for him at his residence and saw him back there. He even came to his guest's sitting room the day he invited him to visit his private residence.

Together with Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh, President Amin flew to Mutukula aboard a helicopter. From there he drove his guest into Tanzanian territory in a field jeep. Tanzanians at the border area most warmly welcomed the two leaders after which host and guests drove back to Mutukula where the population held a rally for the PRG delegation.

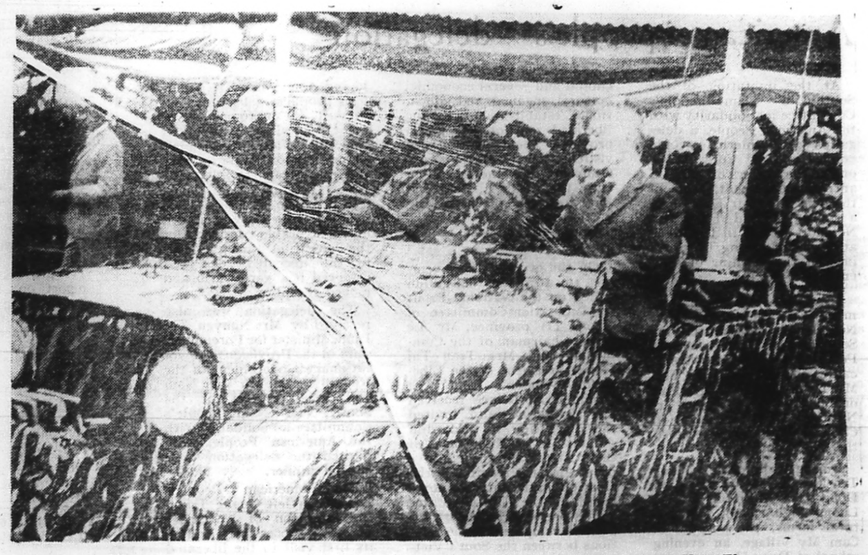
Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho was greeted with a prolonged ovation when he spoke of the strength of unity as the decisive weapon with which to defeat imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism — the source of war, poverty and diseases.

Speaking at a reception on the eve of Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho's departure from Uganda, President Amin stressed:

"I want to let it be known that we strongly condemn the American government and the Saigon administration for their incessant breaches of the main provisions of the Paris Agreement. The heroic people of Viet Nam, more than any other nation, have vividly demonstrated to the world's peoples that no weapon whatsoever can subdue patriotism and the single-mindedness of a nation."

HUYNH VAN LY

Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho held talk with President Idi Amin — Also present, RSVN Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh



President Idi Amin in person behind the wheel, taking Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh to the Uganda — Tanzania frontiers

THE RSVN WELCOMES ITS GUESTS

FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY DELEGATION

The delegation of the French Communist Party led by Secretary General Georges Marchais visited the liberated zone of South Viet Nam on Wednesday at the invitation of the Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the RSVN.

Present to welcome the delegation on its arrival were Tran Nam Trung, Vice-President of the Presidium of the NFL Central Committee, Minister of National Defence of the RSVN; Mme Nguyen Thi Binh, member of the NFL Central Committee, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Le Xich, Chairman of the NFL Committee, and Le San, Chairman of the People's Revolutionary Committee of Quang Tri province; and others.

The delegation sightsaw many places in the liberated zone of Quang Tri and was heartily welcomed by the local officials and population. Tran Nam Trung, in the name of the NFL and the PRG, gave a banquet in honour of the French guests.

At a meeting held by representatives of the Quang Tri population to welcome the delegation, Tran Nam Trung and Georges Marchais delivered their speeches. Tran Nam Trung then presented the guests with a number of local products, and Georges Marchais offered the NFL Central Committee a banner of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, and President Nguyen Huu Tho a bas-relief bearing the portrait of Robespierre.

Georges Marchais in the liberated zone of Quang Tri

American people's delegation

At the invitation of the South Viet Nam People's Committee for Solidarity with the American People, a delegation of the American people comprising Mrs Cora Weiss, one of the leaders of the US anti-war movement, head of the delegation, Mr Don Luce, a journalist and Prof Sam Noumoff arrived in the liberated zone of Quang Tri province on the morning of November 10, 1973.

Mrs Pham Thi Thanh Van, member of the South Viet Nam People's Committee for Solidarity with the American People together with several cadres of the Committee, and Mr Doan Nhat Tang, head of the office of the Quang Tri National Front for Liberation Committee warmly received the delegation.

During its stay in Quang Tri, the delegation called on Dong Ha hospital, Trieu Luong high school, agricultural farms, the hospital of Cam My village, an evening school of Dong Ha provincial capital and several economic, cultural, medical and educational establishments in the liberated zone of Quang Tri province. The delegation also visited the "McNamara" electronic line, the Doc Mieu base, the Ai Tu airfield and Base 241, the places of big battles and heavy setbacks of the US and the Saigon army.

On the evening of November 10, 1973 the delegation called on the National Front for Liberation Committee of Quang Tri province, Mr Le Xich, Chairman of the Committee and Mrs Tran Thi Hong, President of the Liberation Women's Union of Quang Tri province received the delegation and invited the delegation to a cordial dinner. Mr Le Xich thanked the American progressive people for their active participation in the antiwar movement in the United States and expressed the desire for a fine development of the relations between the South Vietnamese people and the peace-loving Americans. The American people's delegation expressed its profound sentiments and sincerely thanked the South Viet Nam People's Committee for Solidarity with the American People, the NFL Committee of Quang Tri province and the local people, who have created every favorable condition for the delegation during its stay in the liberated zone and reserved it a very warm and moved reception.

The delegation was also received by Mrs Nguyen Thi Binh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam and Vice-President of the South Viet Nam People's Committee for Solidarity with the American People, who invited the delegation to a cordial dinner.

The American People's Delegation left Quang Tri on the afternoon of November 11, 1973 successfully ending its first visit to the liberated zone of South Viet Nam.

ICCS VISITS THE LIBERATED ZONE OF QUANG TRI

At the invitation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the International Commission of Control and Supervision arrived in the liberated zone of Quang Tri province on the morning of November 13, 1973.

The ICCS' delegation comprised :

— Ambassador H.E. Dharsono, head of the Indonesian delegation in the ICCS and Chairman of the ICCS in November, 1973,

— Ambassador Ferenc Esztergalyos, head of the Hungarian delegation in the ICCS,

— Ambassador Eugeniusz Kulaga, head of the Polish delegation in the ICCS, and

— Ambassador Assad Khan Sadry, head of the Iran delegation in the ICCS.

Accompanied the ambassadors were their respective senior military and political advisors.

The ICCS paid a courtesy visit to the People's Revolutionary Committee of Quang Tri. Mr Le San, President of the People's Revolutionary Committee and Mr Le Xich, President of the NFL Committee of Quang Tri province and many other caders of the two Committees warmly received the delegation.

The delegation also visited Dong Ha provincial capital, the hospital and Dong Ha port.

Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, on behalf of the RSVN PRG received the delegates of the International Commission of Control and Supervision at the Government's Guest House in Quang Tri on the afternoon.

Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh warmly welcomed the ICCS delegates and expressed the gratitude of the Government and people of the Republic of South Viet Nam to the ICCS for its efforts in its mission of controlling and supervising the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh notified the ICCS of the serious acts of violation of the Paris Agreement by the United States and the Saigon administration, chiefly violation of the ceasefire, the guarantee of democratic liberties and the return of the patriotic and peace-loving people still detained by the Saigon administration; and the bombings of Rang Rang and Loc Ninh airfields, Xa Mat and Thien Ngon areas which are located deep in the zone of control of the RSVN PRG in Tay Ninh province.

The PRG Minister drew the attention of the ICCS on the present critical situation and the task of the International Commission on controlling and supervising the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

Ambassador Dharsono, Head of the Indonesian Delegation and Chairman of the ICCS in Nov. 1973 thanked Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam for their invitation and warm hospitality reserved to the ICCS during its visit to the liberated zone of Quang Tri province. Ambassador Dharsono made a report on the situation and work of the ICCS in carrying out its mission and pledged to make effort to fulfil it so to contribute to the restoration of peace in South Viet Nam.

The Polish, Hungarian and Iranian Ambassadors expressed their desire for a strict implementation of the Paris Agreement so that peace will soon be restored in South Viet Nam, for it is not only the aspiration of the South Vietnamese people but also of all the people over the five continents.

On the same day, Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh held a reception in honour of the ICCS delegates.

On the morning of November 14, 1973 the ICCS delegates left the liberated zone for Saigon.

The DRVN in brief

A blast furnace of the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Complex

Preparation for Spring farming

Many provinces have selected a variety of high-yield rice from numerous strains. Thanks to their network for rice-seed multiplication, the provinces of Hai Hung and Thai Binh have produced nearly 1,000 tons of first class seeds. The average acreage under 2nd class seeds is from 400 to 700 hectares per district, in some districts over 1,000 hectares.

Mechanized ploughs put into use

The Agricultural service has supplied thousands of mechanized ploughs to the provinces to help activate the Winter-Spring farming. Equipped with rubber-tyre wheels, with caterpillars, or with skids they can operate on wet, dry, loose or hard soil. Petrol, oil, lubricants and spare parts have been supplied in adequate quantities to ensure their full-time use.

Hydraulic networks completed

Tens of thousands of people in Thanh Hoa and Ha Tay provinces were mobilized to repair the main hydraulic systems in these provinces. Hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of earth were removed in a matter of a few days. Many canals were dredged and dams and reservoirs repaired. Beside completing a number of hydraulic works, these two provinces have fully rehabilitated 12 other hydraulic systems.

Cast iron produced by blast furnace N° 2

The Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Works completed on Nov. 11 the building of blast furnace N° 2 which has been officially put into commission. It has its set mind on fulfilling the 1973 plan for cast iron production ahead of schedule, and making it possible for blast furnace N° 3 to begin functioning by early 1974.

Hoang Mai railway bridge built

After rehabilitating five bridges on the railway system South of Hanoi, the Railway administration has started repairing the Hoang Mai bridge, one of the biggest on the Thanh Hoa — Vinh section, totally knocked out of use by US bombing in 1972.

The repair work was completed and the inauguration ceremony held towards the end of October last.

A new factory of asphalted concrete

The first North Vietnamese factory of asphalted concrete for road pavement which can produce 25 tons per hour has been commissioned.

The new product makes fine, even and lasting pavements.

Maize production extended

A study was made on the mechaniza tion of sowing, manuring and harvesting of maize by the Agricultural Department which also sent hundreds of tractors to the provinces in the Delta. A dozen of such tractors could do, in some localities, more than one hundred hectares in one day, with a labour efficiency twice the set norm,

Fields in the Midlands grown with maize and sweet potatoes also received help from tractors which contributed to the reclaiming of nearly 10,000 hectares.

More coal extracted

North Viet Nam coalmines have, immediately after the cessation of war, resumed production on a large-scale.

At Pit 6, though heavy and prolonged rains occurred in September, 60,000 tons of coal were extracted — an all-time monthly record.

The proportion of coal increased while that of earth and stones was below the tolerated 2 per cent norm.

Research at Military Medical College

In 1972, the Military Medical College completed 269 researches including:

- 112 related to surgery
- 117 related to native medicine
- 40 related to pharmaceutics.

★ ★ ★

Here and There

Chain resignations

Again the Watergate mess. To stem its offensive flow, the US President had tried hard to place his men here and there. But he had made a bad choice in the person of Archibald Cox, the special prosecutor who took his job too seriously. So Mr Nixon had to fire him to teach him how to control his zeal and hold his mouth. But the Attorney General as well as his deputy refused to execute the decision and preferred to hand in their resignations. These triggered those of eight other high-ranking officials of the Justice Department in protest against the Chief Executive's high-handedness.

Unlike Agnew's, they were not imposed by the White House. Submitted by the very people who held the balance of the law, they show to what extent this bourgeois law can be flouted when it no longer serves the interests of an agent of the financial tycoons.

They have also set off an uproar calling for Nixon's impeachment and resignation. There is no other alternative, mused a black representative, because we are on the brink of fascism.

Sticking like a leech

Yes, but it is not so easy to dislodge Dick the Sticker from the White House.

Despite the growing volume of mail (from a daily average of 5,000 it has risen to 17,000) to the Senate's Judiciary Commission, urging Nixon's impeachment and sacking, despite the sharp fall of his credit rate with Americans, he has been trying his charms on Democratic and Republican legislaters alike, on the public over the TV, on the press in a verbose conference and so on and so forth, in order to prove his non-implication in the scandal and his financial integrity. A noisy campaign, opined *Reuter*.

But public doubt concerning the alleged non-existence of the two most sensitive tapes is not likely to be dispelled by his ploys and two out of three Americans interviewed do not give credence to his tale.

V.O.A. however broadcast on November 13, 1973 comments on the pro-Nixon views of *two* housekeepers. One is not quite clear whether they were not Pat and July themselves who had on many previous occasions entered the list against his opponents. But didn't July herself during two press conferences held in July last let it be known that in May her father had considered resignation because of Watergate.

But since then, a human being can have changed his mind more than once, can't he?

Veritas odium parit

Saigon "diplomatic circles" 's tongues have been wagging about Thieu's "disadvantages" in the international arena.

Fancy nearly 40 countries have recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government and established diplomatic relations with it. Nearly 80 member countries of the 4th Non-Aligned Summit, representing 2/3 of the world's nations and more than one half of its population have admitted it to the assembly as a full-fledged member and sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese. This undoubtedly implies that the movement does not recognize the Saigon regime and regards it as Uncle Sam's "tail"

Amidst US-Saigon back-biting, calumnies and antics aimed at disparaging the PRG, the Saigon acting Foreign Minister Nguyen Phu Duc just spilled the beans: "Our diplomacy is not so bad, but it is at a disadvantage because we are a US ally... We have to face disadvantages and difficulties because we have to lean on the US and the anti-US countries are all against us."

A week later, he got the boot and was dispatched to a small European country as Saigon envoy.

There are beans one should not spill, aren't there?

HUONG NAM

A new strengthening of Lao-Vietnamese militant friendship

THE Lao liberated areas lately witnessed an event of historic significance in the Lao and Vietnamese struggles in the encounter of loyal comrades-in-arms of the two countries, during the first good will visit of the VNWP and DRVN Government delegation under Le Duan, first Secretary of the VNWP Central Committee from November 2 to 6 1973.

The talks between the leaders of the two countries and the contacts between the Vietnamese guests with the Lao people, cadres and armed forces in various localities were imbued with long-standing fraternal affection. The VNWP and DRVN delegates were given an exceptionally hearty and solemn welcome by the leaders of the Lao Patriotic Front, representatives of the Alliance of Patriotic Neutralist Forces and Lao people. In a Joint communiqué released on the occasion, the two sides expressed their gratification at the achievements of the "historic and epoch-making significance" of their respective peoples, in the form of the Paris and Vientiane Agreements. They also strongly denounced the US-Saigon-Vientiane systematic violations of the latter's essential clauses, thus creating a serious impediment to peace, national reconciliation and concord in South Viet Nam and delaying the achievement of peace and national concord in Laos.

"Inspired by its deep desire to have on its Western border a really independent, peaceful and neutralist Laos," the Joint Communiqué continues, "the DRVN pledges its full support and respect for the Lao people's aspiration after independence, peace, neutrality and national concord and warmly welcomes the efforts of the various Lao parties to set up the Provisional National Union Government and the National Coalition Political Council. The DRVN Government expresses its readiness to establish and promote solid relations of friendship and co-operation with the said Provisional National Union Government on the basis of mutual respect for each country's sovereignty, territorial integrity's, political regime, of non-interference in each country internal affairs and of non-allowance to any third country to use the territory of one country for intervention and aggression against the other side, in the spirit of equality and mutual interest, for the sake of peace and prosperity of both countries as well as of this area of the world.

As one of the signatories to the Vientiane Agreement, the Lao Patriotic Forces are of the view that the Provisional National Union Government which will be set up in Laos should follow the peaceful, neutralist line of the Kingdom of Laos, support all the efforts of the DRVN Government and the PRG to have the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam fully implemented and the factual existence of two administrations in South Viet Nam recognized as stipulated in the Paris Agreement.

Both sides share the view that independence and peace in Viet Nam and independence and peace in Laos are closely connected. Therefore, the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and the Vientiane Agreement on Laos must both be strictly implemented."

The Joint Communiqué also voices "the satisfaction of both sides at the special relationship between the Vietnamese and Lao peoples, a model relationship rarely seen so far, which is one decisive factor of the revolutionary struggle as well as of national construction to be performed in compliance with the aspirations of the people of each country. They also affirm their mutual determination to preserve the solidarity and the friendship between the two peoples as the apple of their eye and to educate the younger generations to continuously cultivate it."

Though their common enemy has been inflicted a severe setback and considerably weakened, his nature remains unchanged. He is still continuing his military involvement in South Viet Nam and Laos and sticking to his neo-colonialist scheme there. In many other places throughout the world, he is striving to hide his real colours as a murderer using B.52's and toxic chemicals by secretly instigating military coups d'etat or playing the part of a "mediator" whose only intention is to look for "peace" advantageous to his selfish interests and those of his local clients. With the Nixon doctrine, US imperialism has not changed its spots, and remains the source and cause of all conflicts in the world and the evil force always bent on opposing the drive for democracy and independence, the tendency toward national reconciliation, concord and social progress, and the trend to genuine peace now steadily developing in the Third World and all over the globe.

In such a context, this new advance of the examplary relationship and of the unshakable Lao-Vietnamese militant solidarity assumes a still greater significance not only for the peoples of Laos and Viet Nam but also for all the peoples confronting imperialism and colonialism.

Always bearing in mind that their past victories were only possible thanks to the tremendous sacrifices of the great rear as well as of the fraternal peoples of Laos and Cambodia, the people of South Viet Nam warmly welcome this historic event. No doubt it will actively stimulate the three Indochinese peoples' struggle against the US imperialists and their agents, for national independence and freedom, national reconciliation and concord and for a prosperous society built in accordance with the people's wishes and aspirations, and will help to bring their glorious cause to fruition.

VIET NAM
PRIDE OF WORLD PEACE MOVEMENT

THE delegation of the Republic of South Viet Nam to the Conference of World Peace Forces arrived in the Soviet Union on October 21, 1973 by an early winter morning. Immense forests and fields were covered by a thin blanket of snow streaked with yellowish leaves.

Moscow with its blue sky and white snow appeared in all her splendour in the golden sun rays. She was preparing to greet the unprecedented festival of world peace forces and at the same time the 56th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

Kuprianov, the Soviet writer who had written much about the Vietnamese people's struggle, told us: "Today Moscow is radiant in the sunrays and joins us in welcoming with pride and warmth the Vietnamese brothers returning with glory from a fight for the defence of peace."

AT 4p.m. October 25, the Conference opened solemnly in the Great Hall of the Kremlin. More than 3,200 delegates and observers representing 144 countries, 117 national and international bodies, as well as 9 organizations of the United Nations were attending.

Dr Trinh Dinh Thao, head of the Delegation of the Republic of South Viet Nam and Mr Hoang Minh Giam, head of the Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, were elected members of the Presidium which also included other famous personalities representing all colours of skin — black, yellow, white — dressed in national costumes, of all ages, all walks of life, belonging to all political parties and religious creeds... Speeches were delivered in many languages of the world, but there was one thing common to all, that was their objective — "to fight against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, racial discrimination, aggressive wars, oppression and poverty, for peace, freedom, national independence, social progress and human dignity."

In this Assembly, Vietnamese was used a working language concurrently with Russian, French, English, Arabic, and Spanish.

An outstanding feature of the gathering was the attitude of the majority of delegates towards Viet Nam. Right from the opening ceremony till the the closing of the meeting, the two words "Viet Nam" were continually repeated and became a household word with all delegates.

Sean Mc Bride, ex-Foreign Minister of Ireland and Vice-Chairman of the Congress Preparatory Committee, voiced in his opening speech his gratification to note that among the delegates quite a number represented national liberation movements, which reminded him of the last Peace Conference held in Bandung in which such elder statesmen as Ho Chi Minh and others put forth initiatives resulting in the formulation of the Pancha Shila principles. Mc Bride was warmly acclaimed by delegates who all highly valued the contributions of President Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese people to the national liberation and world peace movements.

Romesh Chandra, from India, was elected Chairman of the Conference. He emphasized the special meaning and importance of this rally which surpassed in size all the former Assemblies in human history to seek ways to eliminate from human society imperialism and exploitation, war and oppression. It is safe to say that this was the first National Assembly of the world's peoples, convened at a momentous time when the cause of peace had recorded considerable successes. Turning towards the Vietnamese delegation, he continued: Today we are thinking of the Vietnamese people and of the tremendous gain won by them in the form of a peace agreement. This is not only one of the Vietnamese people but also a common victory of all nations in the world. Today the two words "Viet Nam" have the same meaning in all world languages. "Viet Nam" implies that an aggressive war waged by imperialism, however atrocious it may be, will be unable to subdue a nation if this nation remains united in the common fight with all other anti-imperialist forces the world over and benefits by the latter's solidarity and support.

Mc Bride and Chandra were followed by many other speakers who also dealt with the Vietnamese people's success with legitimate pride.

On the afternoon of October 26, all the delegates gave a standing ovation to Lenonid Brezhnev, Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union who spoke of the achievement of the Vietnamese too. "The cessation of the Viet Nam war was an event of worldwide significance. First of all it represented a victory of the heroic people of Viet Nam; it was also a victory of the socialist countries which have never ceased granting the Vietnamese people's legitimate fight an efficient assistance. It was also a victory of all forces of peace which actively fought to end this imperialist aggression in Indochina. The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has set an uncommon standard of courage in its confrontation with the armed intervention of US imperialism, it has made an important contribution in stamping out a hotbed war in Southeast Asia. I think that all of us will agree that the Vietnamese people's foiling aggression and safeguarding their freedom and independence has laid a solid foundation for a just and lasting peace."

All through the seven days' sitting in the Great Hall of the Kremlin as well as in the meeting rooms of sub-committees or in lounges, all people from the highest leader of the Soviet Party and State to the interpreter for the Japanese delegation, whenever they addressed the Vietnamese delegates or discussed Viet Nam, were full of pride and admiration. We had the opportunity to come into touch with many delegations and friends from all the five continents. Everyone told us of his affection and attachment to Viet Nam. An African friend whom we accidentally met in the hotel lift, told us: "Salut Viet Nam héroïque," the only French words he had learned just to greet members of the Vietnamese delegations. A female delegate from Colombia was looking for us only to ask for a Vietnamese post stamp or coin as souvenir "We took pride in the Vietnamese people's victory like in our own," she said, "it has set a glowing example for the whole world."

Welcoming our delegation to a Moscow factory named after Kalinin, Frolov, a turner of workshop 2, said: "We greet the RSVN Delegation to the World Peace Forces Conference with a special joy, because the heroic Vietnamese people's fight against imperialism, for peace and freedom, has earned the affection and admiration of the whole mankind."

Among the delegates there was an oversea Vietnamese woman. She was all in tears when seeing us, out of happiness, and also of anger at the US-Thieu crimes against her native country... Though living far from the Fatherland, she had been learning hard the Vietnamese language so as to be able to render some service to Viet Nam. She found pride and joy even in such chores as cooking or interpreting for delegations from her native land.

On October 31, 1973 at the last plenary session, a resolution on Viet Nam was unanimously passed. Once again the world peace forces voiced their powerful and valuable support for the Vietnamese people's legitimate effort. This is undoubtedly an indispensable source of strength for us to defeat the enemy.

Thank you, Conference of World Peace Forces! Thank you, friends from all the five continents who have been giving the Vietnamese people all their warm solidarity and priceless support!

Thailand after the flight of the "Strong men"

TODAY'S Thailand, after the early October student turmoil, resembles a lake after a violent storm. In its fundamental aspects, the country's policy, both home and foreign, shows no difference from what used to be when the Thanom-Praphas junta was still in power. The promises uttered by the new government — in which not a few old figures sit — still remain empty words. But the fact is that in Thailand's history, such events as the flight of the strong men, are simply unprecedented.

The calmness of a river surface often conceals ground swells and it is safe to say that such is the case in Thailand today. Nobody in this country would have dared, a few months ago, foretell the October outburst of the student movement. Even the regime's strong men, and their bosses in the US Embassy, were unable to foresee the magnitude of the uprising, although they had at their disposal a whole intelligence network. It was obvious, wrote the *International Herald Tribune* on October 18, 1973, that US officials were caught napping by the rapid collapse of the Thanom regime in its confrontation with the students and their allies. This only provides a proof that the former rulers had under-estimated the political consciousness and organizational capabilities of the students whom they had thought quite indifferent towards extramural affairs; neither had they been aware of the psychological changes experienced by their people.

Western correspondents present on the spot can provide us with an insight into the situation on the eve of the student rebellion.

On the whole, the country was driven into an impasse — political, economic and social. The ruling military junta had long placed Thailand in a position of subservience to the United States. They seemed to be quite satisfied with the "prosperity" brought to *Thai* cities by their toeing the US line in Viet Nam. This "prosperity" had gradually faded with the repatriation of the bulk of US troops under the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam. Just as the Viet Nam war had helped double Thailand's GNP within ten years, wrote *The Times* on October 15, 1973, its cessation heaped additional problems on that country. A solution to these was all the more difficult as Thailand had no independent and well-balanced economy. Her last harvest was poor, the price of rice shot up, the people's life was plagued by new difficulties. Meanwhile, the ruling circles wanted only to preserve their selfish privileges. Corruption was rampant in administrative services at all levels. All genuinely democratic freedoms of the people were strangled by the Thanom-Praphas gang to cope with the rising discontent of the masses and maintain the *status quo*. Thanom had promised a new Constitution within 36 months, then within only 20 months, but his word had turned out to be sheer demagogy. In foreign relations, the military junta took no account of the important changes that had been operating at an accelerated tempo in Southeast Asia, especially in the neighbouring Indochinese countries — Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia since early this year. In brief the Thanom-Praphas out-moded home and foreign policy remained unchanged.

Stagnation is a breeding ground for opposition. As *the London Times* judiciously noted on Oct. 15, in the past years, political awakeness was fast growing in Thailand. As soon as an experimental democratic Constitution was enforced and general election organized in early 1969, all the seats at the Bangkok constituency were won by candidates from the opposition Democratic Party. Although the military were still able to rule through a party in the Parliament they had themselves created, a number of deputies they had patronized at the start turned against them after two years, just at a time when those military staged a *coup d'Etat* against their own Constitution in order to establish their military dictatorship with no control whatsoever. This volteface of the military junta only reflected their embarrassment and weakness. Confronted with a persistent guerilla war in the highlands and part of the plains, and with a latent, but expanding, opposition movement of various social segments in the cities, the ruling clique felt they could no longer use arbitrary methods and dared not resort to demagogic ploys.

Their uninspired participation in the US aggression in Indochina had had a backlash at home. Complaints about the misuse of US military bases in Thailand and Thai involvement in the war had often been voiced by the rebellous students that brought about the fall of Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn's dictatorship (*International Herald Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1973).

At this critical juncture characterized by an overall stalemate, the Thanom-Praphas arbitrary rule seemed at best a near-explosion steam boiler. The Thai regime, wrote *Le Monde* on Oct. 18, 1973, finally took on a backward appearance, it was an impotent dictatorship, and the student movement was strong enough to remove the lid of the boiler, with an explosion more powerful than expected.

No meaningful progress has been recorded since mid-October. No promise has been made either by the new administration for any fundamental policy change. Right after his advent to power, the new Premier declared that Thailand's foreign policy would not change, including in her relations with the United States. The new Defence Minister (who was Air Force commander in the former regime) announced that new anti-insurgency campaigns were in the making for the end of the rainy season (*AFP*, Nov. 14, 1973) and that US military presence in Thailand remained a necessity. In its home policy the new government has pledged to proclaim a new Constitution and to hold general elections within six months, but no mention has been made of other problems.

Such scanty and slow alterations are far from meeting the urgent aspirations of the Thai students and people. *The Nation* which appeared in Bangkok, on Oct. 24 carried an open letter addressed to the new Premier and reflecting the anxiety of the masses: It seems we haven't had as yet a new foreign policy in the wake of the fall of the Thanom government, the letter emphasized, and this is an urgent requirement. Talks are now going with the United States on US military presence in Thailand. Both the United States and the Thai people wanted to know the Thai government's position on their issue. The same paper *The Nation* on October 22, wrote that Thai opinion was concerned over an eventual comeback of the deposed trio Thanom — Praphas — Narong; Thanom and Praphas had been in power for more than 10 years and had had enough time to foster a number of henchmen who stay on after their flight. Who knows what may happen in the future, the paper added, and the present calm is fraught with danger.

The students and people's movement has been expanding to many provinces. On October 19, a student leader declared that the drive to topple Thanom and Praphas was only an initial step towards a democratic form of government in Thailand. The students have concentrated their efforts on demanding punishment of Thanom and Praphas' henchmen, and as a matter of fact, many high officials, their agents, have been relieved of their offices, under popular pressure.

The deep contradictions within Thailand's society, which were at the bottom of the students' October uprising, are left intact and the new government has taken no measure to settle them. Significantly the new commander of the Thai armed forces, general Kriss Sivara, told pressmen on November 14: "Peace and order cannot be said to have been restored so long as student actions are going on over many issues" (*Reuter*, November 14, 1973). Reversely, the students might as well reply that so long as a solution is not given to pending problems, student demonstrations will continue.

The question is now whether Mr Sanya Thammasak's new boiler can contain the ebullience of the students and people who are clamouring for radical changes. If this boiler remains closed as it is up to now while water is seething inside, there is every ground to believe that a new explosion is forthcoming.

LE MINH

Non-refund Economic Aid Agreement of Bulgaria to the RSVN

At the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the economic delegation of the RSVN PRG headed by Mr Duong Thanh Long, Special envoy of the PRG of the RSVN arrived in Sofia on November 5.

On the same day, Mr Mako Dakov, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the PRB cordially received the South Vietnamese delegation.

On the evening of November 8, in Sofia, a solemn ceremony was organized for the signing of the Agreement between the PRG of the RSVN and the Government of the PRB on non-refund Economic Aid of Bulgaria to the RSVN.

According to the Agreement, Bulgaria will assist the RSVN with technical equipment of telephone, medicaments, food stuffs, clothings and textile materials as a contribution to the rebuilding of the economy and the healing of the wounds of war of the Republic of South Viet Nam.

Mr Duong Thanh Long, Special envoy and Head of the economic delegation of the PRG of the RSVN, on behalf of the PRG of the RSVN and Mr G. Gueorguiev, Head of the economic delegation of the Government of the PRB, on behalf of the Bulgarian Government, signed the said Agreement.

Present at the ceremony were RSVN Ambassador Pham Thai Than and DRVN Ambassador, Madame Dinh Thi Ngoc Tao.

On the Bulgarian side were Messrs Mako Dakov, Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers, G. Atanassov Vice-Chairman of the Bulgarian Fatherland Front and Chairman of the Bulgarian Committee for Solidarity with Viet Nam, and A. Kabachiev Deputy-Head of the Committee of State Plan.

— An exhibitton of over 80 paintings depicting the life and struggle of the Vietnamese by 40 Vietnamese artists opened in Moscow on November 2nd.

A similar display was held in Leningrad on the same occasion.

— In its statement issued on November 9, the Secretariat of the World Peace Council resolutely supported the November 9, 1973 appeal of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam which condemned the Nguyen Van Thieu administration's serious war actions. "What is imperative now," the document stressed, "is that all the forces of peace in the world should bring pressure to bear on the United States and the Saigon government to strictly abide by the Paris Agreement and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué, for a lasting peace to be guaranteed in Viet Nam.

— On the same day, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers made public a statement denouncing the US-aided and -abetted Saigon regime's ceaseless and grave violations of the Paris Agreement and brazen air raids on Loc Ninh district town and other populated areas in the liberated zone of South Viet Nam. The Saigon army also mounted a series of land-grabbing and pacification operations to terrorize the South Vietnamese... "Meanwhile, the US government continues to rush thousands of tons of hardware and ammunition to South Viet Nam", the statement added.

— In an interview with the Ambassador of the Republic of South Viet Nam to Tanzania on November 7, Tanzanian Health Minister Muinyit said: "We consider your struggle as our own one because your enemy is also ours. May we assure you of our continued and ever more vigorous moral and material support. It is you who have helped us considerably. Therefore it is a duty of ours to support you. We will wholeheartedly back you and insist that the Saigon regime implement strictly the Paris Agreement and the Joint Communiqué on Viet Nam."

Cambodia in the flush of victory

ACCORDING to *AKI*, in a year of sustained and courageous combat beginning November 1972, the people and patriotic forces of Cambodia scored far-reaching successes in all fronts. They put out of action 178,000 mercenaries, seized 44,350 weapons, including over 100 artillery pieces of various calibers and 646 transceivers, destroyed, damaged or captured 292 aircraft, sank or put out of commission 770 warships and other craft, and levelled 1,588 garrisons.

Following up those gains in the first days of November this year, the patriotic forces stepped up actions and inflicted heavy adverse losses.

Around Phnom Penh: after razing the adverse position at Prech Grabao on Oct. 31, liberation troops encircled and shelled Chamca Ta Nan, and forcefully assailed the enemy fanning out toward Baset in a move to relieve their beleaguered forces at Trupeng Thuot, thereby winning control over the road section leading from the latter town to Baset. Baham on the said highway came under fire on Nov. 2.

The Phnom Penh command mustered a sizable force against Route 38 but fell into devastatiug ambushes especially between Prech Ho and Day Kraham. Fighting also flared up north of the river Prech Thuot. For days running in early November, particularly on the 5th and 6th, the enemy hurled many battalions into thrusts into Prech Thong to reoccupy Prech Luong, Prech Ampin and Prech Krabao. Failing in their attempt they left behind 180 casualties along with 3 ships and motor boats.

Vihia Sua was subjected to a heavy attack: the enemy battalion stationed here was virtually written off.

On Route 4: liberation troops overran an adverse position between Bec Chan and Kampo on Nov. 4 morning. 62 casualties were listed and 40 weapons and 30 cartloads of materiel captured. Highway 4 remained blocked east of Bec Chan 15 km from Phnom Penh. It was also cut off at Talat on Nov. 11. At Bec Chan and Talat the patriotic forces put 130 enemy out of action and destroyed or set afire 6 vehicles (2 armoured personnel carriers M. 113) on Nov. 10 and 11. Fighting still continues.

On Route 5: Nov. 1, liberation troops foiled a rescue operation of Phnom Penh militia forces at Coc Sdao, Tara Ray and Toc Lo Ac. Adverse casualties amounted to 230 on Nov. 3 alone.

The adverse tough efforts to dig in at Toc Lo Ac completely failed on Nov. 5 when the locality was liberated and battalions 46 and 126 knocked out. The patriotic forces took a toll of 472 men, seized 200,000 bullets of various calibers and 10 tons of equipment.

Krang: It is a fairly important base comprising a garrison network for the defence of the town of Srang. Overpowered by a violent onslaught of the patriotic forces, it was levelled and the town liberated on the night of Nov. 6. Phnom Penh lost 7 battalions—3,000 men—put out of action, 600 weapons and well over 100 tons of ammunition and equipment.

Kep: With air, naval and Saigon troops' support, a Phnom Penh brigade tried to retake this provincial capital. They received strong counterblows from the liberation forces and left behind 200 men on Highway 16. Western agency reports of Nov. 14 said that Lon Nol and company had called off the much-advertized operation on its thirteenth day and withdrawn from two positions on the highway linking Kep with Kampot. According to preliminary figures, they suffered 410 men killed or captured.

Meanwhile, in coordinated action with ground troops, patriotic forces' artillery shelled adverse positions in such provincial capitals as Kampot, Kompong Thom, Siem Reap, Prey Veng, Kong Pong Chnang... Serious adverse losses were reported.

In the Mid-East

U.S. policy objectives unchanged

AFTER the signing of the Egypt-Israel 6-point cease-fire following the recent Mid-East tour of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, there has been talk in the West of US mediatory role and possible readjustment of US Middle East policy.

Let us confront this with facts. The November 11, 1973 agreement is after all a cease-fire and not a comprehensive, long lasting and definitive settlement of the conflict. And every one is aware that to solve a conflict, whether armed or not, one must trace its deep and direct causes. Otherwise, a cease-fire will threaten to be only a lull in the fighting. During the first days of the implementation of the accord, didn't Israel incessantly violate it, in words as well as in deeds. Such facts have only engendered cautious optimism.

The October 6-22 flare-up was the 4th in the area since the end of World War II because its very sources have not been stamped out completely. The aggressors and war-mongers have been the Israeli reactionary rulers bent on expansionism, aided and abetted by the US and fostered by the latter into its storm troopers of neo-colonialism in the area.

Since the end of the 1967 third Middle East war, they have persisted in their non-compliance with the Security Council's Resolution number 242 which enjoined them to withdraw from extensive territories annexed by them from Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

This occupation and Israeli military onsets on Arab countries have created a tense and often explosive situation in the Middle East, and this with Washington's encouragement, vigorous military support and political umbrella.

In such a context, the touchstone of all positions and settlements regarding the issue has always been whether the Arab peoples' legitimate national rights are respected or not. Their respect calls for an immediate end to Israeli aggressive actions, complete and rapid Israeli pull-out from occupied Arab areas and honouring the Palestinian people's national rights as well as an immediate cessation of US support and aid to Israel.

The resolution on the Middle East of the 4th Non-Aligned Summit has made it clear that "Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy is in fact a serious aggression against the sovereignty of the Arab peoples in the Middle East and a threat to their security and territorial integrity" and that "the military, economic, political and moral support of a number of Western countries, more particularly of the US, has made it possible for Israel to continue its aggressive policy and permanently prolong its occupation of Arab territories."

Obviously enough, as long as the US and Israel have not renounced their above policy, a fair settlement or a lasting peace in that area is inconceivable.

There is fully justified widespread Arab doubt about Washington's honey words and intentions regarding the Middle East. It has been generated by harsh realities:

— Continued active US support for the Tel Aviv expansionists, throughout the recent fighting. According to the official figures of the Pentagon, usually lower than the actual ones, 22,000 tons of weaponry were lifted to Israel including some which had not been used even in Viet Nam. The airlift was officially ended on November 15 but supplies have been flowing to Israel by sea. An additional 2,200 million dollars has been requested by Nixon to make good the losses of his Jewish allies and so has for 1974 in the fiscal year beginning July 1973 another 300 million dollars of military aid. It must be stressed that this huge amount of money is meant for a nation of a few million souls. It unmistakably gives the lie to so-called US disinterested attitude and peace will concerning the Mid-East issue. The presence of the 6th Fleet and of ships of US "vassals" and the October 25 alert of US army are other ominous indications.

—Persistent US refusal to recognize the Arabs' national rights. Since the first Mid-East war, particularly since the 1967 blitzkrieg, the US has been supporting Israeli occupation of Arab territories. In the utterances of US representatives to the U.N. and in the so-called 1970 Rogers Plan, there is no reference to that illegal and universally condemned deed. The US even put forth a perverted interpretation of Resolution 242 of the Security Council asserting that the document did not require complete withdrawal in return for Arab concessions. Even now, in connection with a lasting peace in the Middle East, it seem to ignore the Arabs' right to recover their lost lands and the Palestinians' national rights, which rights are a *sine qua non* condition for any fair arrangement.

For the very national and peace forces of the world, US objectives in the Middle East remain unaltered. Behind Kissinger's diplomatic prestidigitation, US intention to maintain, even to consolidate, its presence there is all too apparent. After her punishment in the latest fray, Israel has had her losses compensated for and been refreshed for her role as a US shock trooper in the Arab world. US unconditional support for Israel spells out clearly the absence of any change of heart on the US part. There may be at best some readjustment prompted by the following developments:

Stiffer resolve and greater capabilities of the Arab nations, particularly the two fighting participants in the recent outburst. Arab solidarity and support of them has been on the upgrade.

The oil weapon has made its impact felt, whereas in the 1967 conflict it was not put to use.

On the diplomatic front, the severance of ties by some 30 African countries with Israel has served a warning which cannot be left unheeded, nor can the sympathy of the Non-Aligned family and socialist countries and progressive mankind.

In the adverse camp, enfeeblement and fissures have plagued the ranks of the aggressor's allies. Unlike the 1967 war, the recent one has ended amidst their internal dissensions and divergences. For different reasons, including dependence on Arab oil, many Western countries have struck a "neutral" attitude, i.e. unsympathetic to US policy toward the Middle East. This has given rise to angry exchanges in the very "year of Europe" of the new Secretary of State. Such alienation is unprecedented and significant.

So the readjustment the US has had to operate in its Middle East policy has not been dictated by its regard for reason and good will but by the changes described above. However, if it is longer possible for it to slight the Arabs' legitimate aspirations, it is seeking other tricks to tide over its current troubles, like economic blandishment of some Arab nations, creation of a peace illusion in other countries together with consolidation and strengthening of Israel into a sort of bugbear. This has not escaped the notice of some Arab leaders, as far as one can infer from their latest statements.

One thing is certain: the Arabs' effort will have to face a complex situation but in much more propitious conditions.

VAN DUC

SOUTH VIET NAM CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION